SQUAD TACTICAL COLLECTIVE TASKS

MANEUVER

- Move.
- Assault.
- Defend.
- Break Contact.
- React To Contact.
- Overwatch and support by fire.
- Conduct point ambush.
- Occupy assembly area.
- Occupy (objective) rally point.
- React to near ambush.

MOBILITY/SURVIVABILITY

- Prepare for chemical attack.
- Prepare for nuclear attack.
- Maintain OPSEC.
- Cross water obstacle.

INTELLIGENCE

- Conduct reconnaissance of an area.

AIR DEFENSE

- React to air attack.

Table 2

ration for combat. Except for those with the 11C MOS, they are taught to perform as fire team leaders on 16 squad tactical collective tasks (Table 2). All of this instruction is conducted within the prescribed length of the Infantry OSUT course, and it is designed to get the most out of these new warriors.

The soldiers who successfully complete the Fast Track Program receive accelerated advancement to Private-2. Exceptional 11M soldiers, after they complete the Bradley Fighting Vehicle basic course, may be selected to attend the 11M20 gunner course. Those who graduate from the latter course are promoted to Private First Class.

The Infantry Training Center has developed a comprehensive notification system to see that the units who will get these soldiers know they are products of the Fast Track Program. For soldiers in COHORT units and those with pinpoint assignments, a form letter is sent directly to the gaining unit's command sergeant major. For non-COHORT soldiers assigned to the continental United States without pinpoint assignments, these letters are sent to the gaining division or installation command sergeant major.

A monthly message sent to each major command identifies the fast track soldiers who are going to them, and each successful graduate is awarded a Department of the Army Certificate of Achievement that will be placed in his military personnel record jacket (MPRJ). Every soldier has an additional letter placed in his Individual Training Record (ITR) and his record is annotated with the additional tasks he has been taught.

The Center's efforts in the Fast Track Program are aimed at giving infantry units throughout the Army better trained and more highly motivated soldiers who are capable of functioning as fire team leaders.

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Weapons, Terrain, and Tactics

MAJOR ANTHONY M. COROALLES

Successful tactics result from the proper employment of weapons on terrain against a reacting enemy. These three elements—weapons, terrain, and enemy—interact with each other to produce certain dynamics that every tactical commander must understand if he is to employ his unit to the best advantage. An analysis of these fundamental elements and the dynamics that they produce may shed some light on the foundations of proper tactics and give tactical commanders a frame of reference they can use under differing field or combat conditions.

The most likely place to start such an analysis is with weapons, since tactics have generally been developed to take advantage of the effects of the weapons or to counter these effects. The close-order, shoulder-to-shoulder tactics of Napoleon and Wellington were a product of the slow-firing, short-range, muzzle-loading weapons of the time.

Conversely, the open-order infiltration tactics of World War I were a reaction to the machineguns, the rapid fire artillery, and the barbed wire that were present on those battlefields. In each case, the tactics resulted from the weapons employed at the time.

Today, our tactics still reflect our weapons. And as before, good modern tactics must be designed to make the most of the effectiveness of our weapons while reducing their limitations.

Since military organizations are a blend of men and weapons, the role of our tactical unit leaders is to apply these

organizations to accomplish an assigned mission. Thus, to a large degree, the job of a tactical leader is to apply his available weapons as effectively and efficiently as possible against an enemy who is trying to do the same.

When planning the employment of weapons, the first consideration must be their range, which is the basis of proper tactical employment. In an open field, for example, a group of soldiers armed with pistols would be totally dominated by a much smaller group armed with M16A2 rifles, because the soldiers armed with rifles could outrange those with pistols. Thus, the riflemen could hit the men armed with pistols, while the men with pistols could not hit those with rifles. In a similar fashion, an M60 machinegun would dominate an M16 rifle, and an artillery piece would dominate a machinegun.

Another employment consideration is the rate of fire of the weapons in question. If, instead of being armed with M16s, the riflemen were armed with muzzle loaders with a 200-meter range, would the rifles still be able to dominate the quicker firing, but shorter range pistols? In this case, the answer is no longer so simple. The solution to the problem must now consider the time it takes to reload the rifles and the closing time for the men with the pistols. This thought process should sound familiar, since it is the same one we use when we position longer range, but slower firing antitank weapons against tanks.

Of course, war doesn't take place in open fields with only one type of weapon on each side; many other variables must also be considered. By isolating these particular factors, though, we can gain some valuable insights into the way weapon capabilities affect tactics.

If, as I have argued, weapon range is of primary tactical importance, then any tactical significance terrain has results from its effect on a weapon's range and on visibility. Terrain is the medium over which we move and use our weapons. When we defend, we want to deny the enemy movement over terrain by bringing him under fire. When we attack, we want to use the terrain to protect us from the enemy's fire as we advance toward him.

CONCEPTUALIZE

The quality that separates a good tactician from a poor one is the ability to conceptualize the effect of terrain on his available weapons. A good tactician uses the terrain over which his units will fight to improve the effects of his weapons on the enemy while reducing the effects of the enemy's weapons upon him. A poor tactician, on the other hand, looks at terrain as a nuisance that serves only to hamper the range of his own weapons.

With this in mind, let's consider the case of a light infantry platoon that is given the mission to defend. A light infantry platoon consists of a mixture of weapons with a variety of ranges—rifles, M249 and M60 machineguns, M203 grenade launchers, LAWs, and perhaps an attached Dragon. But the platoon leader is faced with a dilemma: The weapon present in the greatest quantity in his platoon, the M16 rifle, is also one of the weapons with the shortest range. Conversely, the weapon with the greatest range in the platoon, the M60 machinegun, is the organic weapon present in the fewest number.

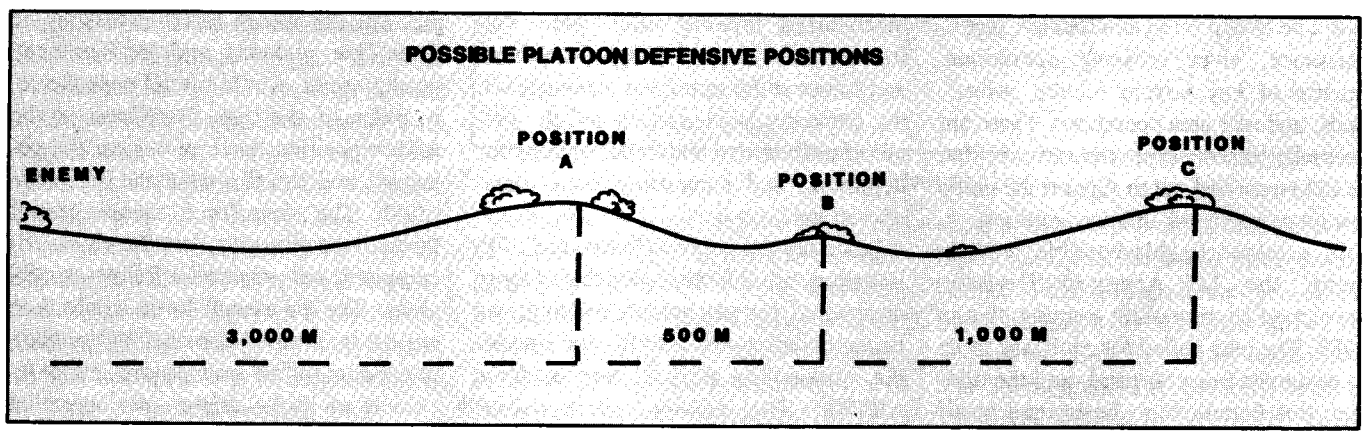
How do we use all of these diverse weapons to the best advantage? Do we base our defense upon the weapon with the shortest or the longest range? Consider the example shown on the accompanying sketch.

A platoon leader can deploy his platoon at either A, B, or C. If he positions his platoon at A, he takes the greatest possible advantage of visibility and of the range of his machineguns and Dragons. But an enemy approaching Position A merely has to halt and call in indirect fire on the exposed frontal slope. Or if he is motorized, he can simply remain at a standoff range and hit the forward slope with a longer-range direct-fire weapon.

In this case the infantry platoon leader at Position A is in the same unhappy situation as the men carrying pistols against the riflemen in the open field. He cannot hit back. As fundamental as this mistake may seem, U.S. forces in combat have defended in this fashion time and time again with predictably grim results.

If the platoon leader deploys his platoon on Position C, he is not substantially better off than he was at Position A. Although he can cover Position B with his machineguns and Dragons, an enemy force needs only to place four machineguns on B to have twice the firepower of the platoon on Position C. With this number of machineguns, an enemy could suppress the two friendly machineguns and have machineguns left over to make life on the forward slope of C most uncomfortable for the friendly soldiers.

By emplacing his platoon on Position B, a platoon leader can get the most power from his available weapons while



keeping the effects of the enemy's weapons to a minimum. From Position B, M16 rifles can cover Position A, thus bringing to bear the bulk of the platoon's weapons. In the other positions, the M16s cannot be brought into play because the machineguns have a greater range than the rifles. Here, by using the terrain, the platoon leader has eliminated the range advantage of the enemy's weapons.

For the infantryman, this is the greatest advantage reverse and counterslope positions offer—they equalize range differences between enemy and friendly weapons. This is particularly important when a light force is dealing with a heavier force. Additionally, reverse and counterslope positions prevent enemy observation of friendly positions and thus keep accurate indirect fire from being called in from long range.

This example serves to illustrate two tactical rules of thumb: First, if you can see farther than you can shoot with most of your weapons, you're probably defending in the wrong position. Second, when attacking, place your overwatching weapons so they can hit the enemy from as far away as possible. Thus, in the defense, try to keep the enemy from achieving standoff over you, while in the attack, position your weapons to achieve standoff over most of his weapons.

As can be seen from this limited example, proper tactics are the product of a thought process that takes into account three main variables: the capabilities and limitations of friendly weapons; the capabilities and limitations of enemy weapons; and the use of terrain to make the most of friendly weapon capabilities while reducing their limitations in relation to the enemy's weapons.

All of these factors must be considered in dynamic interaction with each other. Only then will a tactician be able to arrive at a proper solution. Considering only one or two variables will inevitably lead to a bad decision. After all, if one does not consider the effects of the enemy's weapons, emplacing a platoon on Position A doesn't seem to be a bad idea.

Whether a unit is light or heavy, and whether the leader in charge is a squad leader or a battalion commander, he should always consider the terrain in relation to the capabilities of his own as well as his enemy's weapons.

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Airmobile Operations
For Mechanized Infantry Units

CAPTAIN MARK W. McLAUGHLIN

In certain situations on the battlefield, mechanized infantry soldiers may have to exchange their M113s or Bradleys for UH-1 or UH-60 helicopters. Typical air assault operations that mechanized forces could be called on to conduct are reconnaissance, river crossing operations, seizure of key terrain (choke points), raids, and rear area operations. These are normally short-term operations that would be carried out to support the unit's armor or mounted infantry mission.

In response to this possible requirement, the 1st Armored Division developed an air assault training plan in 1988. The plan called for each task force to designate one company, and the division one battalion, to be trained in air assault operations. Air assault missions were then incorporated into the general defense plans of the trained units as contingencies.

Although the infantry soldiers in the mechanized infantry units were well trained in dismounted or light movement and tactics at the squad and platoon level, the company headquarters and the battalion staff needed additional training for deploying and supporting their units' operations.

Since my company—Company C, 7th Battalion, 6th Infantry—was one of those designated for air assault training, we began planning and training for a possible mission as part of a task force ARTEP. The mission, code named "Gator Strike" (Figure 1), can be used as an example of the way a mechanized infantry air assault operation is conducted.

The concept of the operation was simple. The air assault force, consisting of three line platoons and the company headquarters, would lift off once the remainder of the task force was in the assault position, land on or near the objective, and secure it when the fires were lifted. The task force would assault through the objective, join the air assault company, and prepare for follow-on missions. The air assault force would then collect its organic vehicles and prepare to conduct follow-on missions, either by vehicle or by helicopter. An operation